

M D C C L X X X I V.

THE R. E. B. C. A.

L



T O

Henry Collingwood Selby, Esq.

DEAR SIR,

UNESTABLISHED, and unprotected as I
have always been; whenever I wrote a De-
dication, ingenuous, and noble motives always
predominated over an attention to my interest.
But let the world judge of the sincerity of this
assertion as they please: we are both conscious
that this address is a proper tribute to friendship;
a tribute

a tribute, not debased by any selfish view : for it has been repeatedly demonstrated to me by your active zeal for my welfare, that no incentive can more ardently stimulate you to promote my happiness, than the benevolence of your heart, and your love of intellectual objects ; ---that, by your genuine, by your natural, and habitual sentiments, you are so strongly impelled (as far as your power extends) to redress the rigorous inequalities of our modes of existing upon earth, that you need not the artificial animation, and pleasure, which are produced, in little minds, by the frivolous appendages of compliment, and vanity.

May the time arrive, when our social and friendly hours will not be clouded, by *my* misfortunes,

fortunes, nor by *your* sympathy ; when my heart shall have acquired, from prosperity, the complete forgiveness of injuries, and when that prosperity shall most effectually mortify my enemies ; when, by some charming spell of poetry, or of friendship, we shall have controuled the Dæmon of my adversity, and, at length, driven him back to his native Erebus ! May these hours equally preside over our society, in the vicinity of the Thames, or when we are near the bleak banks of the northern Tweed : may they inspire, and exhilarate our conversation, in the hospitable shades of *Swann's Field*, or in the yet more embowering and fragrant groves of Richmond, or of Sion !

If I was even a Jesuit, by order, and character, no One would doubt the sincerity, and fervour of *this* prayer.

I am, dear Sir,

with great esteem,

your most affectionate friend,

PERCIVAL STOCKDALE.

London,
March 24th, 1784.

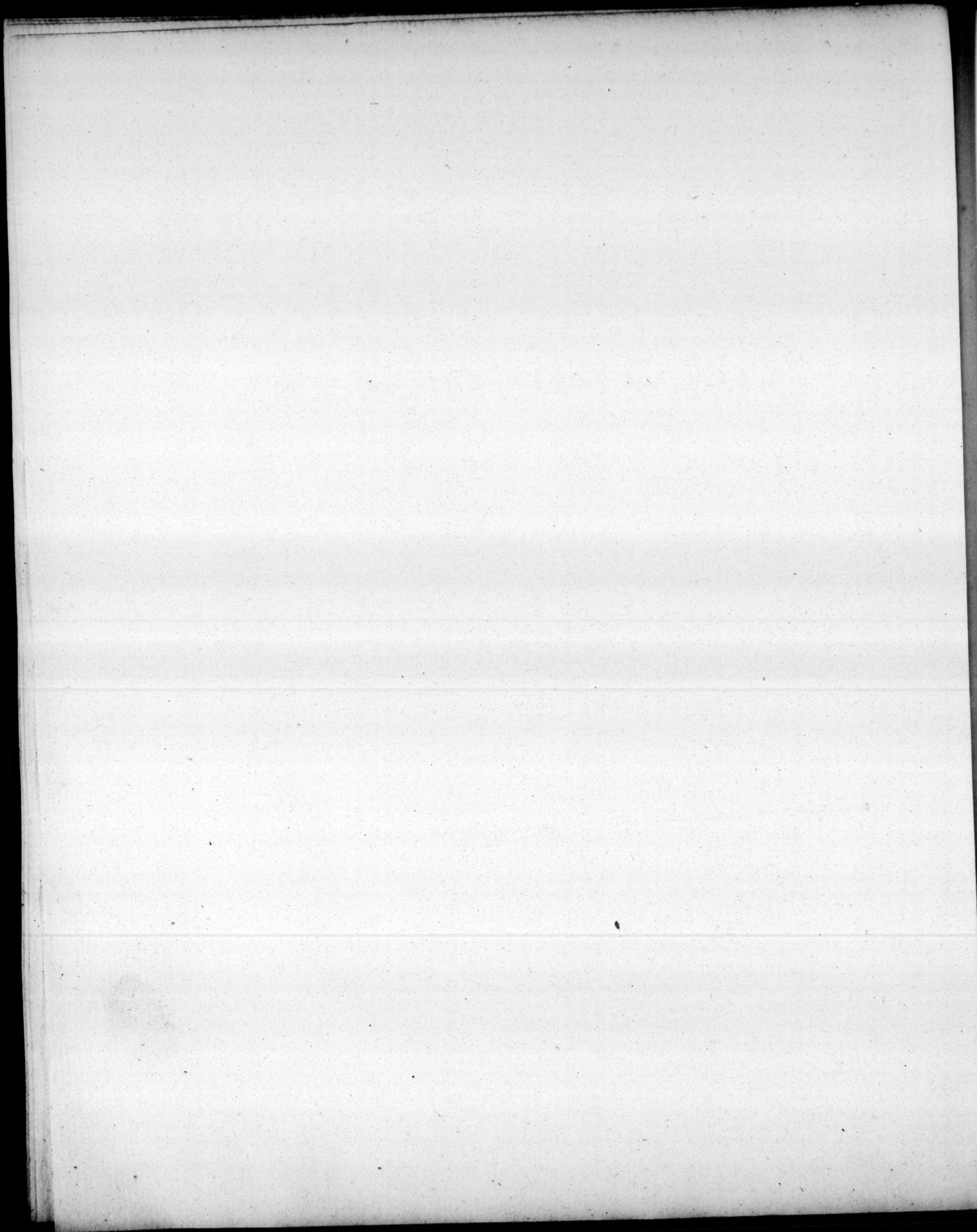
S I D D O N S:

A

P O E M.

Vehemens in flectendo, in quo uno vis omnis oratoris est.

CICERO.—Orator.



S I D D O N S:

A P O E M.

A B A R D, whom no poetic ills appall,
The patron's coldness, or the critic's gall ;
With generous effort, still asserts the bays ;
Or gives a brother's genius all its praise.

Poets not merely, to their Phœbus owe
That art which bids immortal numbers flow ;
The kind inspirer, to his favourite train,
Gives, with his tuneful, his prophetick strain.

B

They

They feel ambition's late, but lasting power ;
 And leave the vain their tinsel of the hour ;
 Of justice from posterity secure,
 Calmly the malice of their age endure.

10

For them, let Jerningham's more happy lyre
 Warm the fair circle with its lambent fire ;
 For them, let Jenyns common sense disdain,
 And fling o'er free-born man the servile chain ;
 In fashion's eye, with varied lustre shine,
 A modern Proteus !---let *his* merit join
 Bard, politician, sophist, and divine ;
 True poets ne'er with monsters croud their lays ;
 For nature dictates, and their hand obeys ;
 They're sure along the stream of time to sail,
 And court no smiles from Mountagu, or Thrale.

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But celebrated actors hardly save
 Their well-earned laurel from the ruthless grave ;
 Their glory sickens at it's owner's death,
 And scarce outlives cotemporary breath.
 With eastern flowers, to strew their path of life,
 Fame, luxury, gold, maintain a friendly strife ;

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But

But they bequeathe no strong, immortal verse ;
And hence their fame droops pallid o'er their herse.

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Poets, a more august, and sacred name,
Their art, our glory, and their fate, our shame,
Bear, and anticipate, a different doom,
In mortal fortune, and beyond the tomb.

35

Those talents which produce the godlike strain,
Subject the man to poverty, and pain ;
Mean labours his ethereal fire controul ;
And want unnerves his energy of soul.
Whenever God, for his mysterious ends,
Pressed with all evils, destitute of friends,
Presents a Chatterton to human view,
The Devil conjures up a Walpole too.

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Yet well they know, ere glory's wreath is won,
And far from Orford's more unfeeling son,
Through glades Elysian ere their spirits rove,
Or through the fragrance of the laurel grove ;
Full well they know (the presage heals their woes)
That even on earth their fame eternal flows ;

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That

That their existence was by heaven designed
 To give the distant sons of human kind
 The brightest emanations of the mind.

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A splendid object, full in fancy's view,
 On bards and actors my reflexions drew;
 Candour my verse digressive will forgive;
 They write correctly who securely live;
 The poet, from his theme before he strayed,
 For SIDDONS had invoked the Muse's aid.
 His liberal strain requests the publick ear,
 Not with presumption, nor fictitious fear.
 Talents pre-eminent are sure to find
 From him the verdict of an honest mind;
 He wishes that the laurel still may bloom
 Round the right brow, and round the sacred tomb;
 Admires, with ardour, each illustrious name;
 Himself, through all his soul, alive to fame.

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SIDDONS ! bright subject for a poet's page !
 Born to augment the glory of the stage !
 Our soul of tragedy restored I see;
 A Garrick's genius is renewed in Thee.

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To

To give our nature all it's glorious course ;
 With moral beauty, with resistless force,
 To call forth all the passions of the mind,
 The good, the brave, the vengeful, the refined ;
 The sigh, the thrill, the start, the angel's tear ;
 Thy Isabella is our Garrick's Lear.

75

'Tis not the beauties of thy form alone,
 Thy graceful motion, thy impassioned tone ;
 Thy charming attitudes, thy magick pause,
 That speaks the eloquence of nature's laws ;
 Not these have given thee high theatrick fame,
 Nor fired the muse to celebrate thy name.

80

When THOMSON'S *Epithets*, to nature true,
 Recall her brightest glories to my view ;
 Whene'er his MIND-ILLUMINED aspect brings
 The look that SPEAKS UNUTTERABLE THINGS ;
 In fancy, then, THY image I shall see ;
 Then, heavenly artist, I shall think on thee !
 Whatever passion animates thine eye ;
 Thence, whether pity steals, or terrors fly ;

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Or Heaven commands, to fix a verse benign,
 With power miraculous, thy face to shine;
 Whatever feeling 'tis thy aim to move,
 Fear, vengeance, hate, benevolence, or love;
 Still do thy looks usurp divine controul, 95
 And on their objects rivet all the soul:
 Thy lightning far outstrips the poet's race;
 Even OTWAY's numbers yield to SIDDONS' face.

Long after thou hast closed the glowing scene;
 Withdrawn thy killing, or transporting mien; 100
 Humanely hast removed from mortal fight,
 THOSE EYES THAT SHED INSUFFERABLE LIGHT;
 Effects continue, rarely seen before;
 The tumult of the passions is not o'er; } 105
 Imagined miseries we still deplore:
 We see a *few* (oh! England's pride, and shame!
 But 'tis where Picq, and Vestris have a name!)
 Who still are clinging to the tale of woe,
 And give, without reserve, their tears to flow;
 Still thy strong pathos works the generous heart; 110
 Still, still we grieve, and cannot think it art.

Even

Even yet distress on meditation grows ;
 Even yet I feel all Isabella's woes ;
 The dreadful thoughts, raised by the magick ring,
 With all her agonies my bosom sting ; 115
 I feel, where Biron ascertains his life,
 All the severe amazement of the wife :
 When she, by force, from his remains is borne,
 Myself, by ruffians, from myself am torne :
 Where the keen dagger gives her soul relief, 120
 Frees her from frenzy, and o'erwhelming grief ;
 At vain compassion, with *her* latest breath,
 I laugh, and triumph in fictitious death.

The poet, born with elegant desires,
 Born to diffuse, in ease, the Muse's fires ; 125
 Inspired by thee, forgets his rigorous doom,
 In Fate's long winter feels his genius bloom ;
 Forgets each taint that checks his growing bays,
 Avowed hostilities, or frugal praise ;
 Nor can grim poverty his warmth restrain ; 130
 The squalid spectre threats his gripe in vain.

On

On other heroines is attention hung ;
 In them, we're charmed with a mellifluous tongue ;
 All action's grace, in them, our eyes admire ;
 Yet, with these powers, from genius we require
 Thy rare prerogative, resistless fire.

} 135

More gentle arts the *calm* spectator views ;
 Their softer pleasure foothes : but fire subdues ;
 This, in a moment, thrilling through the frame,
 Makes voluntary victims to it's flame :
 Of common motion scorns the laws assigned ;
 To Thebes, or Athens, whirls the ravished mind ;
 Sends it's contending passions from the stage,
 And racks us with ambition, grief, or rage.
 This magick property, this fire divine,
 Pours heaven's own lightning through the poet's line.
 This Hayley wants ; and hence his golden lays
 A respite give us ; give us breath to praise.
 But when great Dryden flies along his plain,
 And gives his foaming Pegafus the rein,
 We fight old battles, and we slay the slain.
 This fire diffused it's warmth when Milton sung ;
 And sways the soul, in SIDDONS, and in YOUNGE.

140

145

150

Celestial

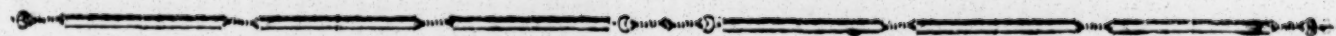
Celestial property ! at thy display,
 How feebler lustre fades, and dies away ! 155
 Thus, if we recollect Blandusia's stream,
 Of Horace, once, the sportive, rural theme ;
 It's grot, it's trees, it's murmurs we admire,
 And in our bosom feel Arcadian fire.
 Next, should our fancy o'er the Atlantick stray, 160
 Where nobler objects wake a bolder lay ;
 Where Orellana, from his mighty source,
 Holds a magnificent, stupendous course ;
 And borne through many a far-extended plain,
 Repels the jealous, and reluctant main ; 165
 Small images, indignant, we discard ;
 We lose the fountain ; nay we lose the bard ;
 The mind expands ; it's genius sweeps along ;
 And pours it's fervour in congenial song.

Or, thus, if Maſon's page a poet reads ; 170
 Sports among dews, and trees, and flowers, and meads ;
 The mind, too candid to the florid strain,
 Expects emotion, but expects, in vain.
 But, if to raise imagination's force,
 He seeks, in Homer's muse, a sure resource ; 175

Perhaps, where Priam his grave council calls,
And Helen moves divinely on the walls;
While Troy's astonished youth new raptures prove,
And age grows tender to the faults of love;
The modern bard imbibes the Grecian fires,
To the sublime, and beautiful aspires;
He emulates, in thought, Homerick lays,
And boldly meditates a DEVON's praise.

180.





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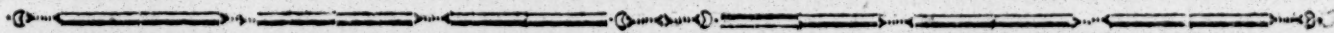
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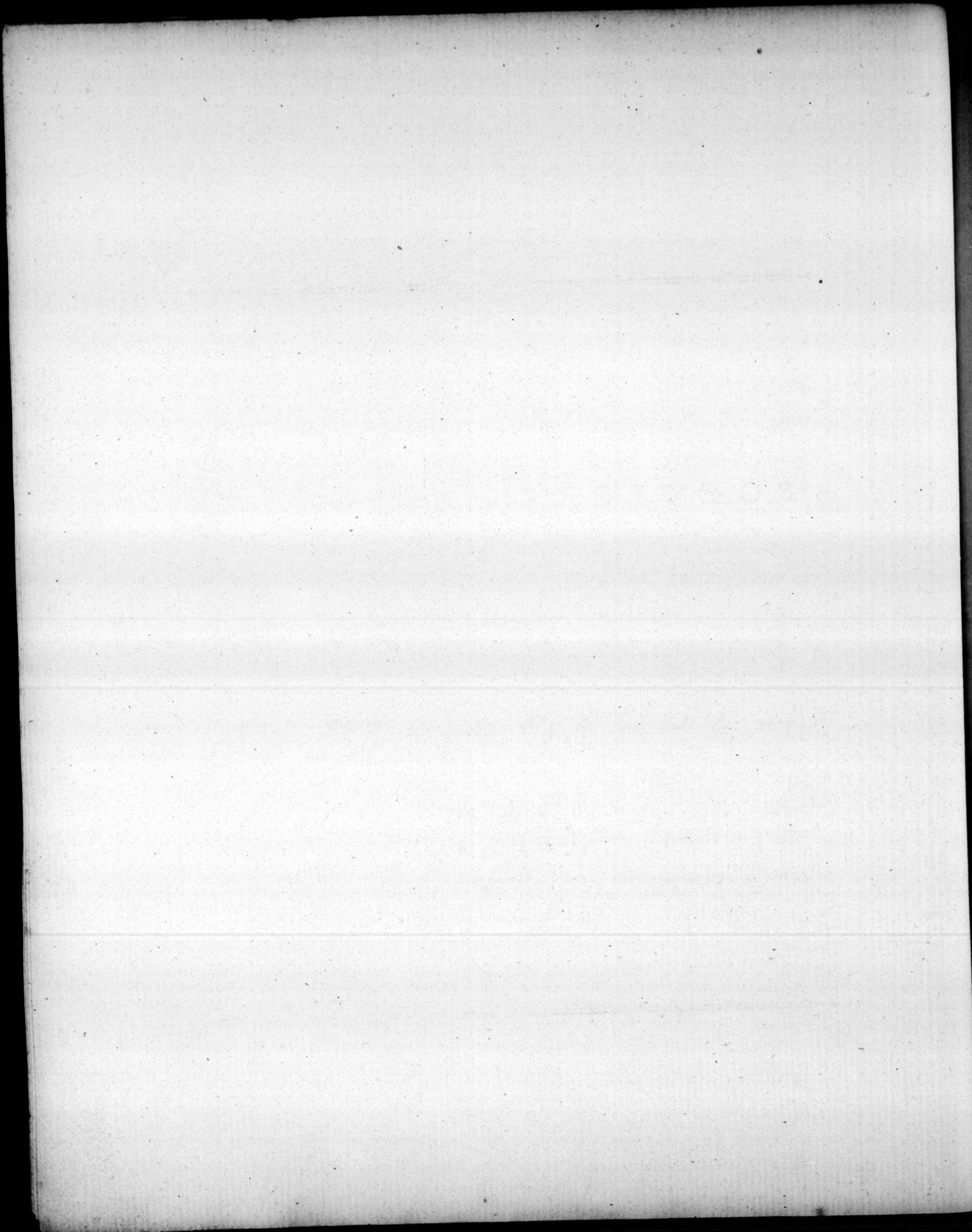
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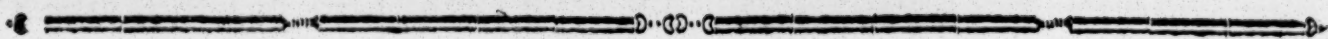
Sir A S H T O N L E V E R.

Nostri acerbissimis doloribus, variisque, et undique circumfusiis
molestiis, alia nulla potuit inveniri Levatio.

CICERO'S Conclusion of his Tusculan Questions.





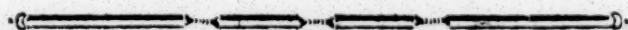


A

POETICAL EPISTLE

T O

Sir ASHTON LEVER.



A Strange, unfashionable modern muse,
 Who, with charmed eye the works of nature views ;
 Still fond to walk in her eternal road,
 And still despising perishable mode ;
 No flatterer of the great, nor of the vain, . 5
 To LEVER wakes her tributary strain.

Whilst others make mankind their easy prey ;
 Of folly, and of vice, extend the sway ;
 Some new incentives plan, to loose desire ;
 Or stimulate the gamester's desperate fire ;

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E

A war

A war with sense, to please the coxcomb, wage;
 And dupe him with a vile Italian stage;
 LEVER expands creation's mighty roll;
 Suggests our Maker to the languid soul;
 Kindles, in torpid breasts, a generous flame;
 And bids us glow with virtue, or with shame.

15

In order fair, we view, disposed by thee,
 Inhabitants of earth, and air, and sea;
 The various wonders of our globe explore,
 From Siam's realm, to California's shoar;
 From where Magellan's thundering billows roll,
 To the fixed winter of the northern pole.

20

Ye, who, with impious pride, condemn that law,
 Meant, from our lives the best effects to draw;
 That law, which Milton's heaven-taught genius fired,
 Which Locke's, and Newton's thoughts, and acts inspired;
 Ye, who impute disorder of the brain
 To those who worship in a Christian fane;
 For once, reject your light, and glittering toys;
 For once, emerging into men, from boys,

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Of

Of thought, and sentiment, the pleasures try ;
 No earthly gain can with *their* blessings vie ;
 Perhaps they'll teach you how to live, and die.
 Repair to LEVER's temple, and adore ;
 And blush, and shudder, and be fools no more.
 To mar your piety, you'll find, at least,
 No wanton organ, and no drawling priest.

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Thither, with me, you condescend to go ;
 I'm confident you love what makes a show.

We, surely, tread on consecrated ground ;
 How nature's Author strikes us, all around !
 I feel profaneness in each idle sound !
 'Tis GOD who speaks ; will you refuse to hear ?
 Nay, he reproves ; will you not learn to fear ?
 Ye, who can only essences inhale ;
 Who shrink, and tremble, at the frosty gale ;
 Will you not dread that Being, who presides
 O'er the wind's force, and o'er the swelling tides ;
 Who shakes with earthquakes, now, some guilty shoar,
 Now bids his thunder, now, Vesuvius, roar !

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Yet,

Yet, generous LEVER ! in *our* leaden days,
 All thy reward may prove, the poet's praise !
 For, thy magnificent, and varied store,
 Which gives to science views unknown before ;
 Which more unfolds the worlds harmonious plan, 55
 The mind eternal, and the mind of man.
 (It's master, in some inauspicious hour,
 Meanly by wealth deserted, and by power)
 Like Houghton's monuments of art, may go
 To find a patroness in Russian snow ; 60
 May be received (since taste is, *here*, no more)
 With genial ardour on a frozen shoar.

And yet, there was a more propitious time,
 Ere knowledge, vigorous, once, in England's clime, }
 Had all it's honours lost, and all it's prime ; 65
 Ere luxury, more general, and refined,
 And venal baseness, quite enslaved the mind ;
 Gave all a Dæmon's rage to low desire,
 And quenched the fainting sparks of generous fire ;
 When English liberality was shown 70
 To ores, and spars, and butterflies of Sloane.

Ye

Ye Fair ! the pride of celebrated isles !
 What power is in *your* frowns, and in your smiles,
 I need not say : *you* may retard our doom ;
 And bid, again, a nation's virtue bloom.

75

When great Lycurgus formed the Spartan state,
 As fixed by *him*, impregnable to fate ;
 His rough Laconian sons were taught to feel
 No ardour, like the love of publick weal :
 They fought no foes ; they owned no haughty Lord ;
 And only for their country drew their sword :
 Then were they nobly prodigal of breath ;
 And all their wish was, Liberty, or Death.
 Through either sex the brave infection ran ;
 They all pursued their legislator's plan.

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85

Ere a young Spartan soldier took the field,
 His mother brought him forth the sacred shield ;
 And said ;---“ Let this, from thee, by none be torne ;
 “ Bear home thy shield ; or on thy shield be borne.”
 He felt the precept throb in every vein :
 He conquered ; or was numbered with the slain.

90

To England's fair, the poet recommends
 Means more adventurous, aimed at distant ends.

F.

But

But, ever, to the great, and arduous deed,
 Peculiar honour is the destined meed.
 The task auspicious of the Spartan dame,
 Was, but to speed the course of virtue's flame;
Yours is the task, when all her power is fled,
 To bid her warmth re-animate the dead;
 To aid the weaker influence of *my* pen;
 And to substantiate shadows into men;
 Shadows of those, who conquered in the fray,
 At Cressy's, Agincourt's, and Blenheim's day.
 Yet let not hope on your bright aspects lower;
 Scarce is a miracle beyond *your* power.

93

100

105

Prescribe us, by your exemplary lives,
 As tender mothers, faithful, generous wives,
 The moral excellence we must pursue,
 If we aspire to be approved by you.
 On you those sentiments kind Heaven bestowed,
 Which urge us on; in glory's thorny road;
 Then, let them, by exertion, be refined;
 And into culture shame each dozing mind.
 Chuse fine amusements; let them not be vain;
 And, oft, at LEVER's, join the sober train;

110

115

The

The female form, august; the female mien,
 Inspired by thought, will dignify the scene.
 Still, in your minds, let judgement hold her seat;
 Scorn an Italian trill; a Frenchman's feet:
 Still, let the path to happiness be trod;
 And give your hours to Nature, and to God.

120

Our living race the Tarentines renew;
 Or softer Sybarites, in them, we view.
 By principle they never will be led
 To emulate the glory of the dead.
 Of English manners, then, ye English Fair,
 To give reforming models, be *your* care.
 Let, from your influence, our improvement flow;
 Extort from love, what we to *reason* owe;
 And since neglectful of *her card* we fail,
 Let us to virtue steer, by *passion's* gale.

125

130

The first of these is the fact that

the second of these is the fact that

the third of these is the fact that

the fourth of these is the fact that

the fifth of these is the fact that

the sixth of these is the fact that

the seventh of these is the fact that

the eighth of these is the fact that

the ninth of these is the fact that

the tenth of these is the fact that

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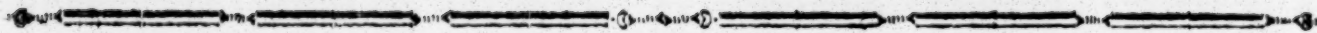
the twenty-fifth of these is the fact that

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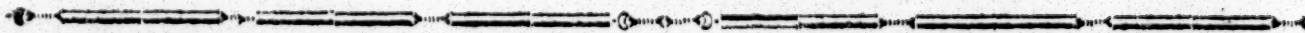


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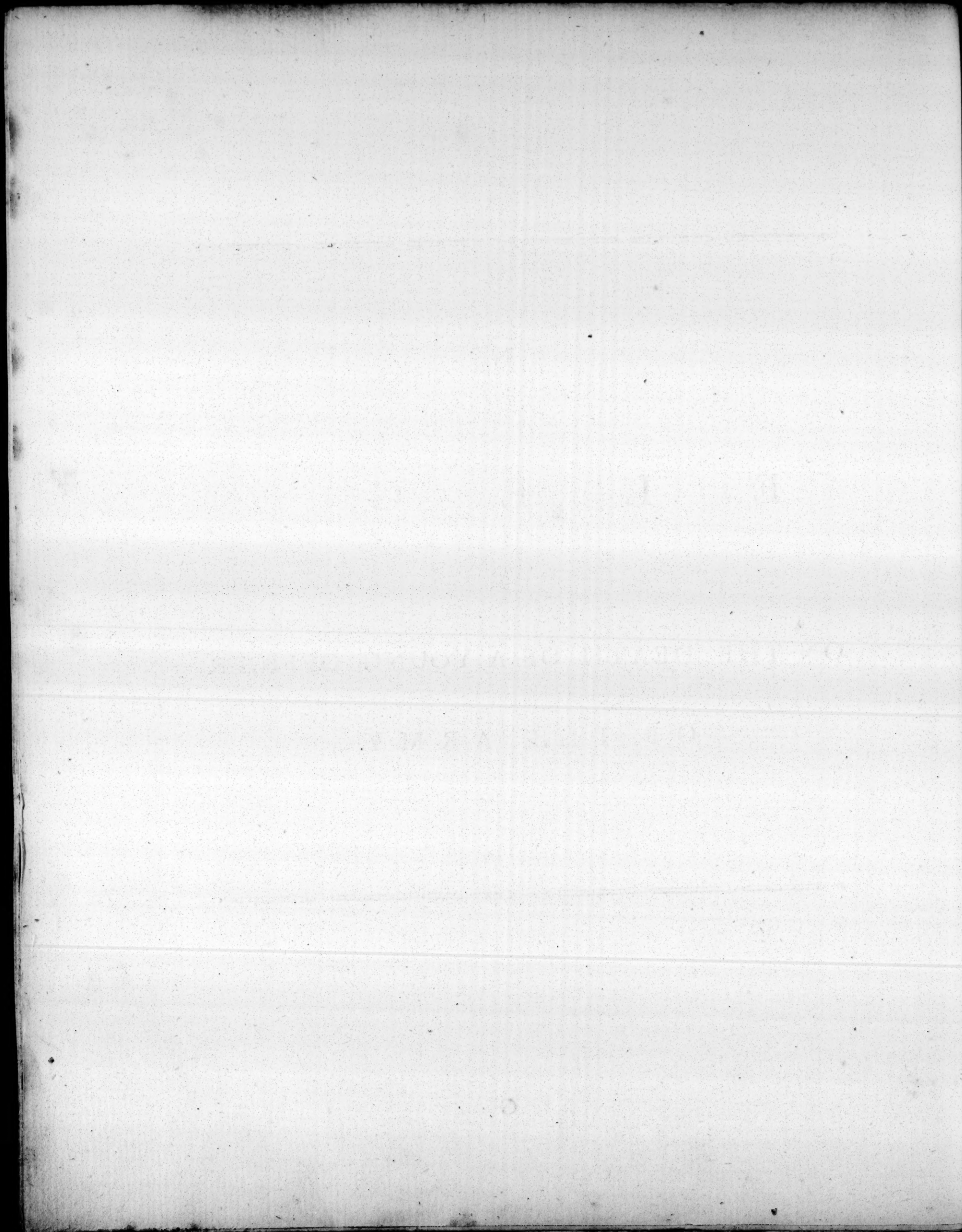
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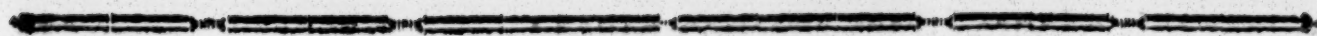
ON THE DEATH OF A YOUNG OFFICER

O F T H E A R M Y.



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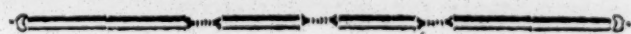




A N

E L E G Y

ON THE DEATH OF A YOUNG OFFICER
OF THE ARMY.



BORN, with the virtues of maturer age,
To warm the poet's, or historian's page ;
Born, life's best deeds, and best rewards to prove,
To merit friendship, and to merit love ; ---
Born with that fire, by which, of old, was hurled
Britannia's thunder on a hostile world ; ---
--- But all this worth, just opening into bloom,
Is closed, for ever, by the ruthless tomb.

5

Severely

Severely for *my* heart, too soon a shade,
 Accept this tribute, from affection payed; 10
 Well-pleased accept it; for the poet's verse,
 More than funereal pomp adorns the herse;
 Gives us, at once, improvement, and relief;
 Refines our morals, while it sooths our grief;
 While it commands our tears afresh to flow, 15
 Indulging soft, and salutary woe.

Forming the numbers to *thy* memory due,
 The frowns of fortune unappalled I view;
 For never could the wanton tyrant's reign
 Extinguish, in my breast, the liberal strain; 20
 Ne'er cool my ardour for a poet's name,
 By her gay fops of fashionable fame;
 Ne'er sink my heart beneath it's noblest ends;
 To honour living, or departed friends.

And let not the severe, ye martial train, 25
 Tell me my grief is weak, and flows in vain!
 Oh! let the short-lived joys, and hopes of youth,
 Impress you, ever, with important truth!

Since

Since life is short, with virtue fill the span ;
 The habits of the youth decide the man.
 The good from fate their *deathless* graces save,
 And are mature, though minors, for the grave.

30

And oft to pleasure's gay, luxuriant bower,
 Contrast the dark, irrevocable hour ;
 Which, haply, gives you, long, the golden light,
 Or adds it's gloom to the returning night.
 For not alone, on Mars's purple field,
 The sons of war their generous spirits yield ;
 Death still attends us, on whatever ground ;
 Lurks in our frame, and hovers all around :
 Oft, even the light, elastick spring of life,
 With life's duration is at fatal strife :
 We draw our dissolution with our breath ;
 Our vital air impregnated with death ;
 And thus as surely by an atom fall,
 As by the Culverin's destructive ball.

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Ambitious of no mean effects, my muse
 Extends to either world her moral views :

H

Then

Then may these lays, enforcing human weal,
Firmly to act, and tenderly to feel;
To my friend's memory, to our species kind,
Still move the heart, and still impell the mind;
With sympathy producing virtue, read,
Preserve the living, and *embalm* the dead.

F I N I S.



